DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 802 HE 022 933

AUTHOR Eddy, Margot Sanders
TITLE College Alcohol Programs. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-HE-88-16
PUB DATE 89
CONTRACT ED-RI-88062014
NOTE 3p.; Small print.
AVAILABLE FROM ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Suite 630, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20036 ($1.00).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alcohol Education; College Environment; *College Programs; College Role; College Students; *Drinking; Higher Education; *Legal Responsibility; *Policy Formation; School Responsibility; Social Behavior
IDENTIFIERS ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

The use and abuse of alcohol on college campuses is reviewed briefly and administrative responses are described. Campus initiatives include policy formation and enforcement, treatment programs, and prevention activities. Issues related to institutional liability are outlined, and important factors that bear on policy formation are detailed, such as student attitudes, campus climate, and quality of services to abusers. The Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol Issues' recommendations for policy regulations are also reviewed, along with recent efforts of Congress, the Federal Government, and the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. (LB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ERIC DIGEST

EDO-HE-88-16

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education The George Washington University One Dupont Circle, Suite 630 Washington, D.C. 20036

ED308802

HE 022 933

College Alcohol Programs

Margot Sanders Eddy, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Alcohol use and abuse on campus is a major issue for college administrations. Concern has been increasing in recent years because of widespread abuse of alcohol in the college population and because of alcohol-related tragedies within campus communities. Changes in the legal drinking age in many states and possible institutional liability for alcohol-related incidents now place additional pressure on college administrators.

Both individually and collectively, institutions are responding to this challenge through carefully structured, comprehensive policies and through educational programs. So far, however, the problem has outdistanced the response. According to BACCHUS (Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students), a college alcohol education program that now has over 200 chapters in the United States and Canada, about 90% of all college students are at least occasional drinkers. Other statistics are similarly dramatic: 85% of college student car accidents and 80% of all college student discipline cases are alcohol-related, and approximately 35% to 40% of college dropouts leave school for alcohol-related reasons.

How Have Colleges and Universities Responded to Campus Alcohol?

Individual campus initiatives have taken many forms, but most have emerged as institutional policies regulating alcohol use on campus. The enforcement of those policies, the treatment and referral services to support existing policies, and actual efforts to prevent alcohol abuse have tended to lag far behind. Most American students are not being educated about responsible drinking and the dangers of abuse, although college authorities agree frequently about the need for such instruction.

Unfortunately, of the programs that are in effect, some are less effective than they might be. Experienced educators are recommending more subtle and creative approaches that integrate alcohol education into courses in the regular college curriculum, as appropriate to the age and psychological development appropriate to the student.

Can the Institution Be Held Liable?

While colleges and universities have traditionally been entrusted with the welfare of their students, the issue of legal liability for alcohol consumption and abuse is less clearly defined. Institutions have not generally been held legally liable for injuries resulting from student alcohol consumption (McLean 1987). The general counsel for the American Council on Education cautions, however, that several roles commonly played by colleges and universities are potential sources of liability. These include the institution's position as supervisor of student conduct, as a property owner, as seller of alcohol, and as "social host" (Steinbach 1985).

Medical schools must be especially careful. Any medical school without formal policies concerning student impairment through alcohol abuse may be in violation of federal and state guidelines by failing to provide adequate guidance about professional conduct. Educators agree that both for the protection of student health and safety and for risk management, a sound institutional policy is essential.

What Are the Most Important Campus Alcohol Issues?

The presence of alcohol on campus raises a number of distinct but related issues. Those directly pertaining to students include:

- What do students know about alcohol? What is their attitude toward alcohol use, and what is their actual drinking behavior?
- Is the legal drinking age in fact known to students?
- What is the extent of education about responsible drinking?
- Is the campus an environment that supports responsible behavior?
- What is the quality of services provided to abusers?

Questions of institutional policy and administrative issues include:

- What are the regulations about alcohol use on campus?
- How are policies enacted and enforced?
- Is the relative emphasis on prevention or treatment?
- What is the policy regarding alcohol-related behavior among faculty or administrators?
- What is the legal responsibility of the institution and its administrators?

How Should Campus Alcohol Policies Address These Issues?

School policies concerning alcohol education and abuse should be comprehensive, positive, carefully structured, consistent with institutional educational goals, and based on the concepts of adult responsibility and freedom of choice. According to the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol Issues, which was created in 1982 by several national groups of college administrators, a comprehensive policy should include a summary of state and local laws concerning: the drinking age and penalties for its violation; sale and group permits for events involving alcohol sales; open containers; and related issues, including implied consent and

dram shop regulations that establish civil penalties against drinking establishments when patrons inflict damage on third parties.

The Task Force also recommends that policies specifically regulate:

- the permissable locations for selling, possessing, serving, and consuming alcoholic beverages on campus;
- events at which alcohol can be served within the institution's jurisdiction;
- alcohol use or nonuse at membership recruitment functions, athletic facilities, or athletic events;
- alcohol marketing, advertising, or promotion on campus or at campus events; and
- the adjudication of violations of school policy (Sherwood 1987).

Strength in Numbers?

Comprehensive efforts to address this problem have evolved as institutions, organizations, college students, and regulatory agencies have formed networks or coalitions to develop awareness of alcohol abuse and specific interventions. In 1982, the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol Issues initiated BACCHUS, and in 1986, Congress lent support to these efforts by passing the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act.

In 1987, the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement called for a network linking the Department, institutions, and major national organizations. The resulting Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse collects and disseminates information about successful programs, provides a forum for continuing collaboration, and identifies areas for further research and development. Its members have indicated their commitment to establishing and enforcing clear policies; to educating the campus community; to creating an environment that promotes and reinforces healthy, responsible living; and to providing a reasonable level of care for abusers in the form of counseling, treatment, and referral.

The Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse has established as criteria for membership that each institution must:

1. develop policy addressing both individual behavior and group activities;
2. actively disseminate its policies within the school community;
3. define policy jurisdiction to include all campus property and institution-controlled events;
4. stipulate policies for alcohol marketing and for hosting campus events; and
5. articulate the institutional commitment to educating students, faculty, and staff regarding alcohol and other abused substances.

The Network of Colleges and Universities also has extended its commitment beyond institutional policy formation by requiring that its members uphold standards of alcohol education and policy enforcement and by insisting they monitor their own progress in promoting responsible behavior regarding substance abuse.

Conclusion

Alcohol use on campus poses a considerable challenge for college and universities. Administrators face the multiple tasks of regulating its use, educating the campus community about its potential dangers, encouraging healthy behavior, and providing adequate referral or treatment services for constituents who need them. Failure to achieve these goals might jeopardize the health, safety, and education of individual students and render institutions and administrators legally vulnerable.

Selected References

Order ERIC documents by "ED" number from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. Call 1-800-227-ERIC.

"Approaches to Drug Abuse Prevention at Colleges and Universities: A Collection of Presentations Made at the National Collegiate Drug Awareness Week Kick-Off Conference." 1988. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. ED 299 938.

Gonzalez, Gerardo M. 1985. "Alcohol on Campus: You Must Ensure Its Responsible Use—Here's How." *AGB Reports* 27(4): 24-28.

McLean, Timothy, M. 1987. "Tort Liability of Colleges and Universities Resulting from Student Alcohol Consumption." *Journal of College and University Law* 14(2): 399-416.

Nelson, Stephen J. 1987. "Alcohol Policies and Educational Mission." NASPA Journal 25(2): 91-97.

Rawley, Beverly Davies and Baldwin, DeWitt C., Jr. 1988. "Substance Abuse Policies and Programs at U.S. Medical Schools." *Journal of Medical Education* 63: 759-761.

Schneider, Janet, and Bunny Porter-Shirley, Eds. *1989. Peterson's Drug and Alcohol Programs and Policies at Four-Year Colleges.* New York: Petersons Guides.

Sherwood, Joan Sargent, Ed. "Alcohol Policies and Practices on College and University Campuses." National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Washington, D.C. ED 292 431.

"Standards of the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse." 1988. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, D.C. ED 297 661.

Steinbach, Sheldon. 1985. "Student Alcohol Abuse: Who Will Pay the Price?" *Educational Record* 66(4): 32-36.

This document was partially prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. ED RI-88-062014. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the positions of policies of OERI or the Department.

The George Washington University
WASHINGTON DC